

REMARKS

Claims 1 through 3, 5 through 34, and 37 through 40 are presented for examination in the present application upon entry of the instant Preliminary Amendment. Claims 4, 35, and 36 have been cancelled without prejudice.

The specification has been amended to include the headings required by MPEP 608.01(a). The specification has also been amended to include a description of references cited during prosecution of the priority application. Further, the Abstract of the Disclosure has been amended to conform to MPEP 608.01(b).

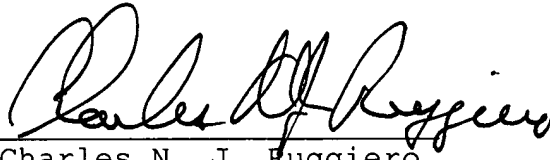
The claims have been amended to conform to U.S. practice. Specifically, the claims presented for examination have been amended to correct translation errors, to provide proper antecedent basis for all claim elements, to include the transitional phrase "comprising" and "wherein" where appropriate, to provide proper Markush group format, and to remove multiple dependencies. Thus, these claim amendments should not affect the scope of equivalents to which these claims are entitled.

In view of the above, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for examination. Applicants respectfully request favorable consideration and passage of this application to allowance.

If for any reason the Examiner feels that consultation with Applicants' attorney would be helpful in the advancement of the prosecution, the Examiner is invited to call the telephone number below for an interview.

Respectfully submitted,

October 15, 2004

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Charles N. J. Ruggiero", written over a horizontal line.

Charles N. J. Ruggiero

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